

COMMENTARY

Greeley water supply is ample, reliable

By Sean Chambers & Harold Evans

Guest Columnists

Across the state, Coloradans are hearing that they need to prepare for drought conditions. Greeley Water has done the planning and laid the groundwork to ensure that its residents have a resilient and secure water supply.

The consistent delivery of safe, high quality, great tasting water is the core mission of Greeley Water.

The city's water system is among the most resilient in the West. Our city water comes from snowpack in four river basins. The city's mountain reservoirs and water rights feed two water treatment plants and 2.7 million feet of pipeline, which then makes it way eventually to your water tap.

This robust water system was developed over the past 130 years with great ingenuity, persistence and regular investments in water rights, storage, and facilities. All these pieces work together to ensure ample water supply and service reliability for Greeley.

The City's Water and Sewer Dept. will host a full day tour of water and wastewater systems on Friday, August 5, 2022. Please RSVP for the full day system tour at: water@greeley-gov.com.

The source of supply is weather dependent, and the city

must manage water resources adaptively. The city uses a science and engineering-based methodology to determine if supply is adequate or if there is a need for a drought response. We evaluate the city's water supply and current water demands, and factor in city water in storage, snowpack, anticipated water from city rights, and the long-range climate and weather forecasts.

This data is used to determine if we are in an 'Adequate Water Year.'

At the April 20 Water and Sewer Board meeting, the Board reviewed the data and staff recommendations before it declared 2022 an Adequate Water Year. As a result, Greeley does not have any watering restrictions for this summer, other than limitations on watering during the heat of the day.

What does this mean for you? While you may have heard that some of our neighboring communities are constrained by drought this year, as is much of the West, that is not the case for Greeley.

There has been a lot of media coverage about systemic drought in the Colorado River Basin and elsewhere, but rest assured that Greeley has ample water for our community. For generations, the city's leadership, staff and our Water & Sewer Board have proactively planned to ensure an adequate supply.

This robust water supply coupled with an extensive system of water infrastructure makes the Greeley system very resilient. We have also provided our residents with water conservation education and tools.

The "Water Budget" method for billing Greeley customers has been in place for the past five years, and it provides an equitable approach to providing the right amount of water for each residential property based on the irrigable area outside the home and the number of people inside the home. Water budget billing is paired with the WaterSmart web application to support the City's goal of promoting efficient water use and helps ensure that we will have adequate water for this year and many years to come.

The city's leadership and its Water & Sewer Board are firmly committed to making sure that Greeley continues to secure ample water supply, storage, and delivery capacity for the communities' needs. Water is the foundation of our sustainable economic growth, urban forest, and healthy landscapes, and we act with intention to ensure that generations of Greeley citizens will be blessed with the same water security we enjoy today.

— *Sean Chambers is Director of Water Utilities for the city of Greeley. Harold Evans is the Chairman of the Greeley Water & Sewer Board.*